



UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 12, 2012

The Honorable Erin Conaton
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Dear Under Secretary Conaton:

As you know, the Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence Program (PDMRA) was instituted to allow service members mobilized and deployed in excess of 12-24 months to accrue leave in addition to their regular leave. This program aims to provide service members the opportunity to spend more time with their families and readjust after multiple deployments. PDMRA contributes to the readiness of each service member by boosting morale for members and their families. PDMRA days allow for a healthy and successful reintegration after extended mobilizations and deployment – a benefit our men and women in uniform have rightly earned.

After learning of the Department's change of policy that would have stripped thousands of service members of their PDMRA benefits, I introduced H.R. 4045 and fought for its quick passage in both chambers of Congress and enactment into law. Introduced while the 1/34 Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT), Minnesota's 'Red Bulls,' were mobilized and eligible for the PDMRA benefits they were promised prior to their deployment, this law ensured that the 2,700 soldiers of the Minnesota Red Bulls – as well as many other Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines – would remain eligible for PDMRA before their release from active duty. I was disappointed to learn that only yesterday the Department of Defense issued policy for the implementation of this law on a timeline that will make it impossible for our Red Bulls to take the leave they earned.

Our troops deserve better than to fall through the cracks of a broken bureaucratic process. It took 41 days for your department to publish the guidance that our services require to implement the policy. This delay is unacceptable. I urge you to direct your staff to correct this problem and give these soldiers the leave they've earned. At this time, only a fraction of the soldiers this law would have helped will be able to take their leave. As a result, our soldiers are frustrated and feel betrayed by their leadership, and I urge you to do everything you can to help them – before it's too late for the few remaining men and women who can still participate. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Additionally, I appreciate you keeping me apprised of the progress your staff is making to

address this problem.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Kline". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Kline" clearly distinguishable.

JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress